

Striped Skunk

(Mephitis mephitis)



Identification:

Size: Average wt. = 5-12 lbs.

Coloration: Black body with 2 white stripes that join at the neck.

Other distinguishing features: Often this species is smelled rather than seen.

Habitat:

This skunk is quite at home in urban areas as well as rural farmlands. Its natural habitat preference, however, is woodland areas with rocky outcroppings.

Benefits:

Skunks are important as small predators. They eat almost anything including vegetation, insects, spiders, reptiles, birds and rodents.

Problems / Concerns:

Skunks have a bad reputation due to their ability to defend themselves by spraying an extremely foul smelling substance. Skunks are also known to carry rabies. These concerns combined with the skunk's ability to adapt to urban areas and become quite common make this a species to discourage.

City Management Policy:

Eradication of this species is neither possible nor recommended. However, the city will not actively manage for the success of this species. The city will maintain secure trash containers to help eliminate artificial food sources. If deemed necessary, the city may trap and destroy a habitually offensive individual.

Note: Trapping and relocating animals does not work. It is not a viable solution.

Citizen's Responsibility:

Skunks are a natural part of our local ecosystems, but encounters with them are often unpleasant. Since practices and conditions found in suburban neighborhoods are the primary reasons skunks flourish in urban areas, citizens are encouraged to do the following.

1. Secure all trash can lids.
2. Secure areas where birdseed and pet foods are stored.
3. Clean up spilled birdseed from around feeders and don't leave dog food, cat food, etc. out overnight.
4. Seal any openings in attics, chimneys, crawl spaces, etc. that could be used as a den. (Be sure there are no skunks trapped inside before you seal any openings.)
5. Above all, don't feed skunks!

Similar Species:

None in the area.